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FROM EMBASSY VATICAN/MESSAGE NO. 130/01

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL PHUM FAID IS RW CH VT

SUBJECT: VATICAN VERBATIM

11. THE JULY 27 - AUGUST 03 EDITION OF NEWS AND VIEWS FROM
VATICAN CITY.

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- POPE RECEIVES YASSER ARAFAT
- VATICAN RECEIVED NO EXTRADITION REQUEST FOR RWANDAN PRIEST
- VATICAN SAYS CHINA RELEASES BISHOP
- VATICAN GIVES \$1.7 MILLION TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

POPE RECEIVES YASSER ARAFAT

12. POPE JOHN PAUL II RECEIVED PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY
PRESIDENT, YASSER ARAFAT AUGUST 02 AT THE PAPAL SUMMER
RESIDENCE AT CASTEL GANDOLFO. AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT RELEASED
BY THE VATICAN AFTER THE MEETING SAID THE TWO LEADERS
DISCUSSED THE PRESENT STATE OF THE PEACE PROCESS. ALSO ON
THE AGENDA WAS THE CONTINUING VIOLENCE WITH ITS RESULTING
VICTIMS. THE STATEMENT SAID THAT THE POPE STRESSED THE
NECESSITY OF ENDING ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AND CONTINUING THE
NEGOTIATIONS WHICH, WITH THE HELP OF THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY, WAS THE ONLY HOPE FOR ACHIEVING PEACE.

VATICAN HAS RECEIVED NO "JUDICIAL REQUEST" FOR RWANDAN
PRIEST ACCUSED OF GENOCIDE

13. VATICAN SPOKESMAN, JOAQUIN NAVARRO-VALLS, ANNOUNCED
JULY 27 THAT THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL TRIBUNAL FOR RWANDA
HAD NOT ISSUED A "JUDICIAL REQUEST" TO THE VATICAN OR THE
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ARCHDIOCESE OF FLORENCE TO HAND OVER A RWANDAN PRIEST
ACCUSED OF GENOCIDE. COMMENTING ON AN EARLIER DECISION BY
ITALIAN AUTHORITIES NOT TO HAND OVER FATHER ATHANASE SEROMBA
WHO HAS BEEN WORKING IN A PARISH IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF
FLORENCE SINCE 1997, NAVARRO-VALLS OPINED THAT "APPARENTLY"
THE COURT'S EXTRADITION REQUEST PROVIDED INADEQUATE EVIDENCE
OF WRONGDOING TO JUSTIFY ARRESTING THE PRIEST. NAVARRO-VALLS
DID NOT SAY WHETHER THE VATICAN CONSULTED WITH THE ITALIAN
GOVERNMENT ON THE CASE. (NOTE. IN 1996, POPE JOHN PAUL II
APPEALED TO RWANDAN CATHOLICS WHO WERE INVOLVED IN THE
GENOCIDE "TO HAVE THE COURAGE TO ASSUME THE CONSEQUENCES OF
THE DEEDS COMMITTED AGAINST GOD AND NEIGHBOR." OTHER VATICAN
AGENCIES HAVE SAID PREVIOUSLY THAT THE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST
FATHER SEROMBA SEEMED PART OF A CAMPAIGN TO DISCREDIT THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH IN RWANDA. END NOTE).

VATICAN ANNOUNCES RELEASE OF CHINESE BISHOP

14. VATICAN MISSIONARY NEWS AGENCY "FIDES" ANNOUNCED AUGUST
02 THAT AUTHORITIES IN CHINA HAVE RELEASED A CATHOLIC BISHOP
THEY ARRESTED 18 MONTHS AGO. THE STATEMENT SAID JOSEPH ZHANG
WEIZHU, "UNOFFICIAL" BISHOP OF XINXIANG IN HENAN, WAS
ARRESTED WITHOUT CHARGES ON JANUARY 25, 2000 AND RELEASED
SOMETIME IN JULY. LOCAL CATHOLICS TOLD FIDES THAT BISHOP
ZHANG WAS RELEASED BECAUSE HE SUFFERS SERIOUS HEALTH
PROBLEMS.

VATICAN GRANTS TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES
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15. A FOUNDATION ESTABLISHED BY POPE JOHN PAUL II TO HELP
INDIGENOUS AND AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITIES IN POOR RURAL
AREAS OF THE CARIBBEAN AND LATIN AMERICA HAS APPROVED GRANTS
TOTALING SOME US DOLLARS 1.8 MILLION. THE FOUNDATION'S
FUNDING COMES MOSTLY FROM THE ITALIAN BISHOPS CONFERENCE.

GRANTS FOR 215 PROJECTS IN 19 COUNTRIES WERE APPROVED DURING AN EARLY JULY ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL MEETING. IN A STATEMENT RELEASED AUGUST 01, THE VATICAN SAID THAT THESE FOCUSED ON AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, ARTISANS AND SMALL BUSINESSES, AND EDUCATIONAL AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS. MERANTE